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SOURCE Nowe Drogi, Vol VII, No 3 (45)

WEGNER'S SPEECH AT EIGHTH PLENUM
OF POLISH UNITED WORKERS' PARTY

[Comment: The following information is taken from one of the commentaries made by dignitaries of the PZPR (Polish United Workers' Party) on Bierut's keynote address at the Eighth Plenum of the party's Central Committee, held 28 March 1953. Each of the commentaries, given in abridged form in Nowe Drogi, is an amplification of Bierut's keynote speech "The Struggle for Continued Strengthening of the Party and the National Front."

Tadeusz Wegner, secretary of the Zarzad Gtowny (Main Administration) of the ZMP (Zwiazek Mlodziezy Polskiej, Union of Polish Youth), whose commentary is given below, criticized the ZMP for not having adequate influence over the young people, and for not knowing how to utilize the latent power in the young people.]

The numerous obligations undertaken by the young people point to the steady growth of their participation. Young people apply en masse for the most difficult work wherever People's Poland needs youth, strength, enthusiasm, and zeal.

We are proud of the fact that during the period of mourning for Stalin, nearly 14,000 activists and members of the ZMP, especially workers and peasants, applied for admittance to the party. During this period, the finest from among the unorganized young people have also asked to join the ZMP. In less than 2 weeks, over 50,000 young workers, peasants, technicians, teachers, and students have strengthened the ranks of the ZMP. In the Stalinogrod Wojewodztwo alone, nearly 14,000 young people, many of whom are workers in coal mines and metallurgical plants, have applied to join the ZMP.

The ZMP has unquestionably great merits in mobilizing and educating the young people, but it does not always know how to liberate and develop the latent power in young people. The ZMP is not always able to produce an atmosphere of great enthusiasm, heroism, and devotion in its daily work. Inadequate instruction, weak and unaggressive ideological and political work, and a

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certain paucity of ideas and methods of work are the main weak points in the ZMP. Many organizations and echelons of the ZMP do not keep pace with the increasing tasks and with the increasing political and cultural needs of the young people. Neither do they develop a healthy initiative among the young people. As a result of these shortcomings, our organization does not have an adequate influence on the young people, and it does not always set the fashion for behavior. Our battle with the enemy and its influence on the young people is not sufficiently effective. All these shortcomings point to the necessity of intensifying pedagogical and ideological work in the ZMP. The main and fundamental obligation of the ZMP is the education of the new generation. The majority of the young people joined enthusiastically in the building of socialism. Some of the young people, however, are still conscious of many capitalistic customs and ideas which are very often obtained from their homes, from reactionary clergy, and from the Voice of America. As a result, vandalism, inattention, and faddism hold sway over certain groups of young people.

The education of the new man is the most important of all ZMP's work. Our greatest concern is to eliminate from the young people's consciousness all capitalist morals, such as egoism, selfishness, insincerity, lying, and hypocrisy. Our great task is to show the young people a new purpose in life and to implant in them the high ideals of socialism. This cannot be accomplished by sporadic drives, but by daily, deep, and patient training of each boy and girl.

The task of training the new man is important, responsible, and difficult. This is one of the fronts of the unrelenting class battle. The mechanism of this battle is complicated, and the activists of the ZMP frequently are not properly prepared for it.

Even though we are on the offensive, the enemy often is able to do us harm because of our ineptness in uncovering enemy activities, and the frequent lack of vigilance among the young activists. We must increase ideological and political training in the ZMP. We must study Marxism and Leninism, and the life and teachings of Stalin. We have to acquaint the young people with the beauty of our ideas, to capture their hearts and minds for our cause, and to equip them for a more effective and aggressive battle with the enemy.

Many activists and workers in the ZMP are characterized by an unwholesome, careless, and "socialdemocratic" [i.e., nationalist] attitude toward ideological and political work. Hence, the political level of teaching in the ZMP is frequently low, with many organizational shortcomings. The teaching, thus, is hardly any good in training members of the ZMP and in elevating their political quality. The pulse of the ideological life in the ZMP is decidedly too weak. The most important task at this moment is to change basically the attitude of echelons and activists of the ZMP toward such fundamental forms of political work as mass training, agitation, book discussions, talks, lectures, etc. These forms of political work should be brought to the fore. Our ideological and political work is frequently shallow and superficial, and produces effects that are flashy and of short duration. We should learn from the party how to consolidate each political gain acquired during a program or campaign. The fact that our work is superficial and that we do not fight stubbornly enough to penetrate the minds and hearts of the young people with the deep meaning of our life, causes many boys and girls, who are leaders in work and members of producers' cooperatives, to remain outside of the organization, not feeling the need to join the ranks of the ZMP. This situation occurs particularly in large factories, in the mining industry, in the construction industry, and in villages, especially in the PGR (Panstwowe Gospodarstwa Rolne, State Farms) and in the producers' cooperatives. There are some plants where only 20 to 25 percent of the young people employed belong to the ZMP. The growth in the ranks of the ZMP is particularly weak and spotty in the Bialystok, Waraw, Kielce, Lublin, and Lodz wojewodztwas.

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Our important task is to strengthen the workers' section in the ZMP, to expand the organization in large industrial plants, and to accelerate the growth of the ZMP in villages and in lagging wojewodztwos.

The ZMP derives its strength from the party's leadership. Regional sections of the ZMP still receive too little aid from the party, especially in their educational work. The role of the ZMP and the young people in all political, economic, and cultural tasks is still frequently underestimated and misunderstood. Sometimes, the guidance of party echelons and organizations over the work of the ZMP is shallow and superficial.

The daily help given to the ZMP by the party echelons and organizations are of immense importance and value. The help, however, should predominate in fundamental matters, in the work of instilling into the youth the great idea of the liberation of man, and in acquainting the young people with our goals. It should also predominate in the elevation of the ideological level of the cadres and activists of the ZMP.

The party organizations' watchfulness over teaching staffs of the ZMP is weak, particularly over the propagandists to whom important and responsible tasks are entrusted. The turnover in this personnel is high and its political quality is low, but the party committees do not care to give it enough attention. The committees are also little concerned about helping teaching staffs to obtain adequate political awareness to conduct such difficult and responsible pedagogical work.

Party leadership implies the penetration of, and daily solicitude over, the training of young people by party echelons and organizations. It means that the party echelons and organizations see that the young people assimilate the experiences of the battle with the class enemy. Strengthening the party's leadership over the young people will assure a greater and more systematic flow of young and devoted persons into the ranks of the party.

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